

Hope Evangelical Free Church

PASTOR'S REPORT
to the
**ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FIFTH ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL
MEETING**

For the calendar year TWO THOUSAND AND TWENTY-FIVE
Presented on January 18, 2026 by Pastor James Roland

GLORIFYING GOD BY APPRENTICING WITH JESUS AND TRANSFORMING LIVES

STATE-OF-THE-BODY

This past year has perhaps been the most unique tenure at Hope. Looking back over the 17 years, I see how people have come and gone while I have remained and grown through good and bad experiences. We have been growing steadily over the past year, not only in attendance numbers and finances, but in spiritual maturity and leadership teamwork. With the arrival of new people, I'm seeing genuine interest in the essential things of God. While the closing of First Baptist Church has saddened us all and brought some challenges, we are also already benefitting from beautiful new relationships in the family of God and are eager to see what God is going to do next!

PERSONAL AND FAMILY WELL-BEING

This year was dramatic with highs and lows for my family and I. My Ordination was a beautiful worship service in the spring, but that was followed by my mother-in-law Kathy Dahl's decline and passing. My father-in-law Gary has had some health issues, but is growing stronger. Heidi has spent much time this year caring for her family members, with her extraordinary delight to serve. Heidi and I got to take a professional development trip in June and July to the Cambridge Apologetics Conference in the U.K.. Then not long after returning, I officiated the wedding for Emma Snyder and Amos Bergen in Minnesota. The following month, Sophia and Aaron were married near the family farm at Rolfe, Iowa. Our son Peter moved to Billings, Montana in August and we're thrilled to hear and see the cool things he's learning and doing. I've attended Pathways Spring Training and a Fall Leadership Summit at Alta, Iowa.

| OFFICIAL RECORD | '22 | '23 | '24 | '25 |
|--------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Sermons (Pastor James) | 48 | 44 | 46 | 46 |
| Sermons (others) | 4 | 7 | 10 | 6 |
| Baptisms | 0 | 0 | 8 | 0 |
| Children born/adopted | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Child/Parent Dedications | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Weddings | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Funerals of others | - | 7 | 6 | 3 |
| Funerals of members | 1 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Members re/moved | 0 | 2 | 4 | 0 |
| New Members | 0 | 8 | 2 | 2 |
| Covenanted Members | 55 | 59 | 53 | 51 |
| Souls in care | 91 | 100 | 75 | 73 |
| Average total attendance | - | 52 | 54 | 59 |

OUTREACH TO THE WORLD

This summer brought our annual 4th of July Food Booth for Missions, and the disbursements went to the Bridge, the Methodist Church, and a Kenya Refugee relief. In July, we did a Vacation Bible Camp with the Bridge at the Methodist Church and felt like it was one of the best ever! Many of the kids were interested in the Bible and having a deeper relationship with Jesus.

We started Prayer Walks in September and covered the whole city of Storm Lake by the end of December. This was one of the highlights of the year, and we felt God moving through those prayers!

I've attended and helped lead many Conversation Clubs for Adult English Learners at the Bridge, with David Olson. We also hosted a meal for these international students at our home and hope to have some of them visit our church soon.

This year we also tried something different by hosting the Bolerjack Concert. It was a good experience and I think we will do more concerts in the future.

At the end of October, I started a Pathways Training trip to Nepal, but got turned around before leaving the country due to a visa issue with Indian Immigration. It was a disappointment, yet it turned for good by allowing me to be present during Bud Rydberg's passing and funeral. Praise the Lord.

I continue to be active with Jail Ministry, Nursing Home visits and services, as well as volunteer as a Police Chaplain.

SHEPHERDING AND NURTURE TOWARD EACH OTHER

In February, Carrie Bargloff and I joined others from Faith Bible to form a Storm Lake Cohort in Accessible Church Ministry. After a wonderful year of study, reflection and prayer, we just finished on January 8. This experience has really helped me see people with disabilities and assets rather than liabilities. The study also helped us develop an Accessibility Action Plan which has already made some changes and we expect more in 2026.

Sadly, we lost three church members, Kathy Dahl, Kevin Price, and Bud Rydberg. We mark each one of these saints with thankfulness for the years God gave them to us.

In 2025, we started "Hidden in My Heart" Bible Memory Verse Program, using the Fighter Verse sets and it has really helped us cherish God's word and chew on its meaning.

John and Denise Huskamp served as our church delegates to both the EFCA Central District Conference, as well as the EFCA One National Conference in June. I'm so thankful for them!

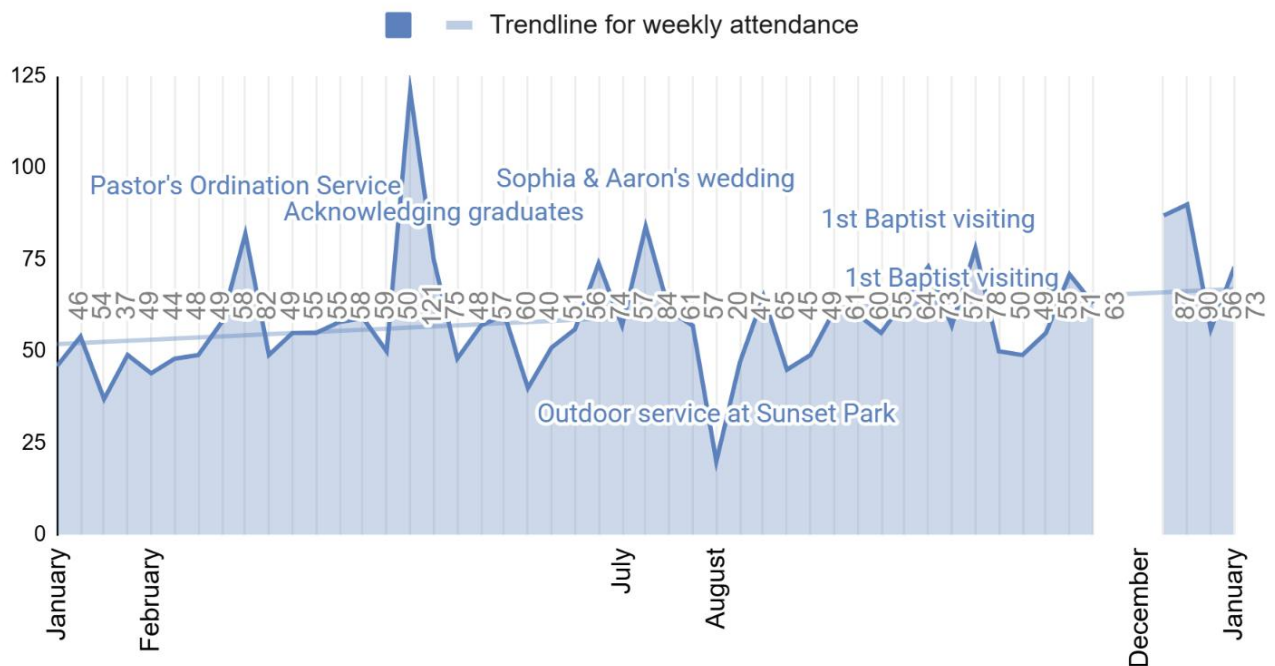
In May, several of us attended and EFCA Central Life-Giving Leader training at Summit. Then on September 15, I was accompanied by Gary Dahl, Daniel Lopez and John Huskamp at the Life-Giving Elders seminar. I really appreciate these regional trainings from the District.

One of the coolest things we did this year was to host the Pathways Training for Women in November. These ladies knocked the ball out of the park with top notch work on the Book of Jonah! We look forward to the next workshop this year.

WORSHIP GOD

Our leading musicians, Heidi, Liz, Bryan, David and Rhonda continue to bless us with great music and make us grateful for such excellence. Mark and Leah Peebles joined us this fall and have added a great deal with their guitar, violin and love for the Lord! Our sermon series in the Book of Exodus started January 4th and completed on September 28th. Now we're excited to start with the New Testament book of 1 John.

Attendance 2025



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During the 4th Quarter (October-December) of 2025, despite two cancelled services and other weeks of bad weather, we averaged 66 people. This amounts to a 22% increase over last year's 4th Quarter. While more time and data are needed to accurately measure the situation, FBC's decision to merge with us is having noticeable effects. But what is also interesting, as seen in the graph, is that we were already seeing an upward trend before FBC folks started attending. These are good signs of steady health and growth.

I don't think we should make drastic increases for spending in our budget at this time. However, if our income increases over the next six months, I would like to consider revising the budget at the

Second or Third Quarterly Meetings of 2026. The following is a kind of “wish list” and figures are in annual amounts that could be halved for the second half of the year.

Missions Wish List

- Increase financial commitments and visits with our current missionary partners
- Add new missionary partners formerly supported by First Baptist Church
- \$3,000 Rosebud Indian Reservation short-term trip with youth
- \$1,000 Pathways short-term mission trip assistance

Hope Church Wish List

- \$10,000 to help match BVCCF grant for bathroom ADA compliance remodel
- \$10,000 Ministry Assistant to help part-time with ministry, communication
- \$3,000 Ministry Development training or conferences for Elders and Deaconate
- \$3,000 Training, conferences or lessons to develop our musicians.
- \$3,000 Training, conferences etc. to develop our Sunday school teachers.
- \$3,000 for Fellowship meals and events
- \$5,000 New sign
- \$5,000 Start saving for interim pastor to support a sabbatical plan in 2027 or 2028
- \$2,000 for reimbursable expense budget for ministry-related expenses. (This increase would relieve me from having to use my own funds for ministry expenses)

DAYS TO BE MARKED

9 Mar Pastor James' Ordination Service
12 Mar, Submitted Lilly Grant Proposal
5 Apr, Blake and Jenna Bolerjack Concert
17 Apr, Jewish Passover Sedar Meal
19 Apr, Good Friday with Summit
27-29 Apr Central District Conference
May 1 Kevin Price memorial service
2-3 May, Men's Wilderness Camp
14 Jun, Campfire Cookout
24-26 Jun, EFCA One National Conference
14-18 Jul, VBS w/ Gospel Fellowship, Bridge
4 Jul, Food Booth for Missions
23 Jul, Wed Dinner at The Manor
3 Aug, Sun Joint Outdoor Service
13 Aug, Conflict Management Workshop
18 Aug, Alan Aronson Funeral
15 Sep, Life-Giving Elders Training

4 Oct, Sat Hotdog roast, hayride at Huskamps
5 Nov, Bud Rydberg funeral
7-8 Nov, Pathways for Women
16 Nov, Harvest Dinner, First Baptist Church
voted to request merge
17 Dec, Talent Show
24 Dec, Christmas in the Barn

LOOKING AHEAD IN 2026

Feb 18 Ash Wednesday, Lent begins
Mar 1 Hope Church 125th Anniversary
Mar 21 Marriage Retreat at SYC Camp, Rural
Sioux Rapids.
Apr 5 Easter Sunday
Apr 27-28 EFCA Central Conference